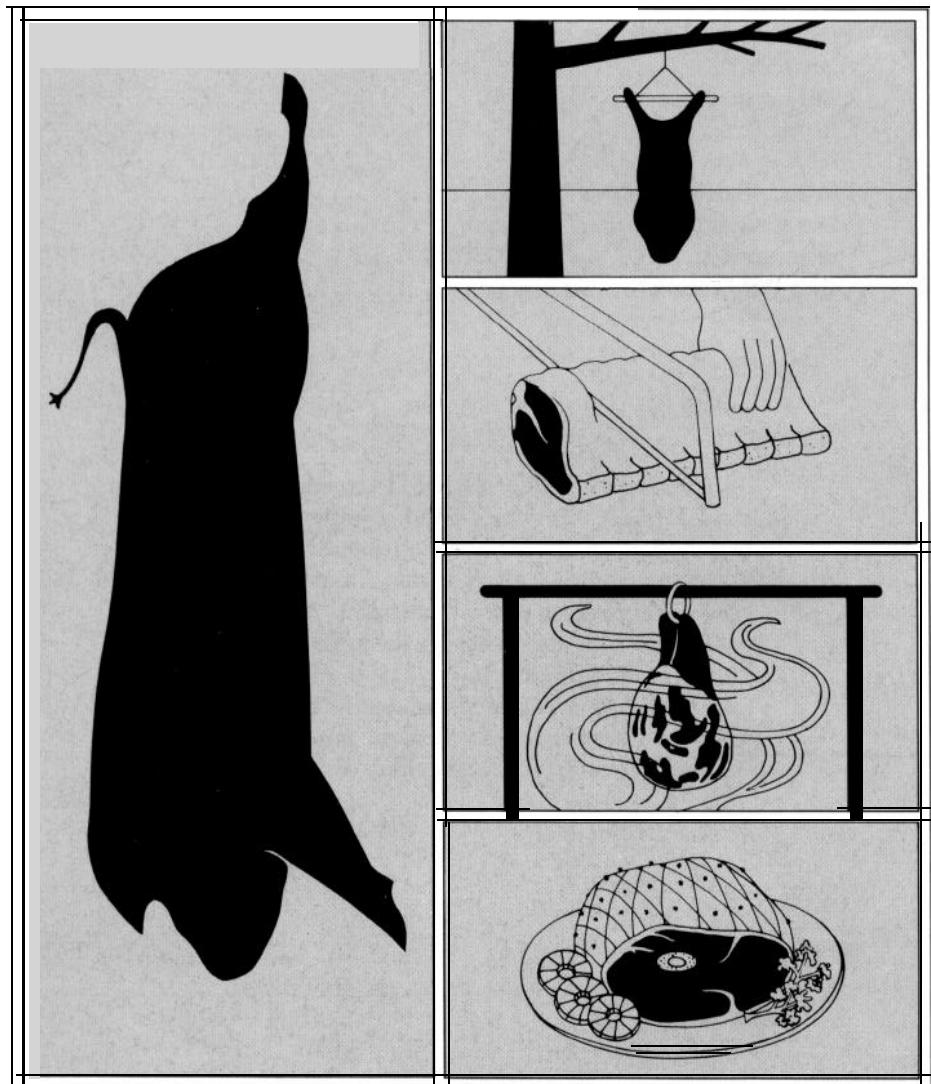
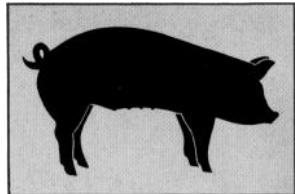


PORK

Slaughtering, Cutting, Preserving, and Cooking on the Farm



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On January 24, 1978, four USDA agencies-Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Cooperative State Research Service (CSRS), Extension Service (ES), and the National Agricultural Library (NAL)-merged to become a new organization, the Science and Education Administration (SEA), U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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Pork Slaughtering, Cutting, Preserving, and Cooking on the Farm

By H. Russell Cross, *Research Food Technologist*,¹ E. Curtis Green, *Meat Marketing Specialist*,² William R. Jones, *Extension Meal Specialist*,³ Roger L. West, *Associate Professor, Meat Science*,⁴ and Anthony W. Kotula, *Chief Meat Science Research Laboratory*,⁵ (Photographs by Donald K. Rough⁶ and Terry K. O'Driscoll⁵)

SELECTION AND CARE OF ANIMAL BEFORE SLAUGHTER

Several factors should be considered before slaughtering a hog for home consumption. The most important considerations are health, kind of animal (barrow, gilt, sow, or boar), expected meat yield, and care of the animal prior to slaughter.

H e a l t h

You should take care that an unhealthy animal is not selected for slaughter. At the time of selection, look for signs of sickness such as

¹Meat Science Research Laboratory, Northeastern Region, SEA-FR, Beltsville, Md. 20705.

²Standardization Branch, Meat Quality Division, Food Safety and Quality Service, Washington, D.C. 20250.

³Cooperative Extension Service, Auburn University, Auburn, Ala. 36830.

⁴Department of Animal Science, University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla. 32611.

⁵Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, Northeastern Region, SEA-FR, Beltsville, Md. 20705

fever, increased breathing rate, and diarrhea. Animals suspected of being unhealthy should be treated by a veterinarian until the animal is returned to a healthy state.

Animal Care

It is important to exercise proper care of the animal prior to slaughter, if you expect to obtain high quality meat. Pen the animal in a clean, dry place the day before slaughtering. Restrict the animal from feed 24 hours prior to slaughter, but provide access to water at all times. The slaughter of hot, excited animals increases the risk of sickness, injury, and darker meat; therefore, do not run the animal or wrestle with it. Bruises and whip marks cause bloody spots which must be trimmed out.

Animal Type and Meat Yield

Highest quality pork is produced from young, healthy, well-fed, meaty hogs that weigh from 175 to 240 pounds. The meat-type hog should have full, plump, meaty hams and

straight, smooth sides. Fat should be firm, evenly distributed, and not more than 1.6 to 1.7 inches average thickness over the back. The average meat-type hog produces as much pork as a family of two consumes in 10 to 12 months. Heavier, fatter hogs produce less lean and more excess fat.

A meat-type hog, when cut and trimmed according to the methods described later, will yield approximately 65 to 70 percent of its carcass weight in ham, picnic shoulder, loin, bacon, and Boston butt. Expected yields of major and minor cuts from a U.S. No. 2 hog are presented in table 1.

The slaughter of boars is not recommended. Meat from boars has a strong odor during cooking, and an off-flavor. This "sex" odor and flavor is often identified as being "soapy," and the odor increases as boars approach sexual maturity. If old

boars are to be slaughtered, they should be castrated and allowed to heal prior to being slaughtered.

PREPARING FOR SLAUGHTER

Prior to the day of slaughter, select the slaughter site, accumulate all equipment, prepare for waste disposal, and, if necessary, arrange with a local processor or meat market for chilling and cutting the carcass. If you plan to have the carcass chilled and cut up, make arrangements concerning the time and day on which the carcass can be accepted, the charges, and specific instructions for chilling, cutting, and wrapping.

Site Selection

Slaughter site selection is extremely important. The amount of space and equipment needed will depend on the

Table 1.-Percentages of **major and minor cuts from a U.S. No. 2 hog trimmed according to USDA procedures**

Cuts	Percentage of USDA carcass weight
Ham (trimmed)	19
Belly (untrimmed)	18
Collar, fat back, and clear plate	18
Picnic shoulder and Boston butt (trimmed)	17
Loin (trimmed)	17
Feet, tail, and neckbones	5
Spareribs	3
Jowl (untrimmed)	3
	100
Four lean cuts*	53

Adapted from Smith, King & Carpenter, 1975.

*Ham, loin, picnic shoulder, and Boston butt.

method (scalding or skinning) used. If the carcass is to be scalded, be sure that a site is selected where a fire can be built, and clean, running water is available. If a tree is to be used to suspend the carcass, select a healthy limb, 6 to 8 inches in diameter and 8 to 10 feet from the ground. This will ensure that the limb will not break from the weight of the carcass, and the carcass can be fully extended above the ground for viscera removal and splitting. If the animal is to be slaughtered in a building, be sure that a strong beam 8 to 10 feet from the floor is available. The floor should be clean and, preferably, concrete.

After selection of the slaughter site, clean up the area to ensure that leaves and dirt are not blown on the carcass during slaughter. If the site has a wooden or concrete floor, wash the floor and all equipment with plenty of soap and water. Be sure to rinse thoroughly because sanitizers discolor the meat and may cause off-flavors. If animals are to be slaughtered outdoors, use straw to cover the area where the carcass will be suspended and eviscerated.

The weather on the day of slaughter should also be considered. During hot weather, the animal should be slaughtered during the cooler early morning or late evening hours. Since an inexperienced person will take 2 to 3 hours to complete the slaughter operation, care should be taken to avoid long exposure of the carcass to high temperatures. During cold weather of less than 30° F, the animal can be slaughtered at any time, because spoilage bacteria do not grow rapidly at cold temperatures. During periods of extremely cold weather, avoid letting

the carcass freeze immediately after slaughter because the meat will be less tender than if it is permitted to chill without freezing. Slaughter during high winds may result in dirt and other contaminants being blown onto the carcass.

Waste Disposal

All waste products should be disposed of in a sanitary manner. If the animal is to be slaughtered in the open, select a site with good drainage so that blood and water can drain away from the carcass. Do not allow blood and water to pollute nearby streams or other water supplies.

Disposal of viscera and hair is often a problem. Arrange to have a local processor or rendering plant pick up these wastes. If this is not possible, bury them so that dogs and other animals cannot dig them up. Hair can be burned.

Slaughter Equipment

Elaborate and expensive equipment is not necessary but certain items are essential (fig. 1). The amount of equipment will depend on the slaughter procedure used. If the carcass is to be scalded rather than skinned, additional equipment will be needed (items 16 to 23). The following slaughter equipment is recommended:

1. .22 caliber rifle with long or long rifle cartridges
2. Sharp skinning knife and steel
3. Boning knife
4. Block and tackle or chain hoist - should be strong enough to hold weight of pig to be slaughtered

EQUIPMENT

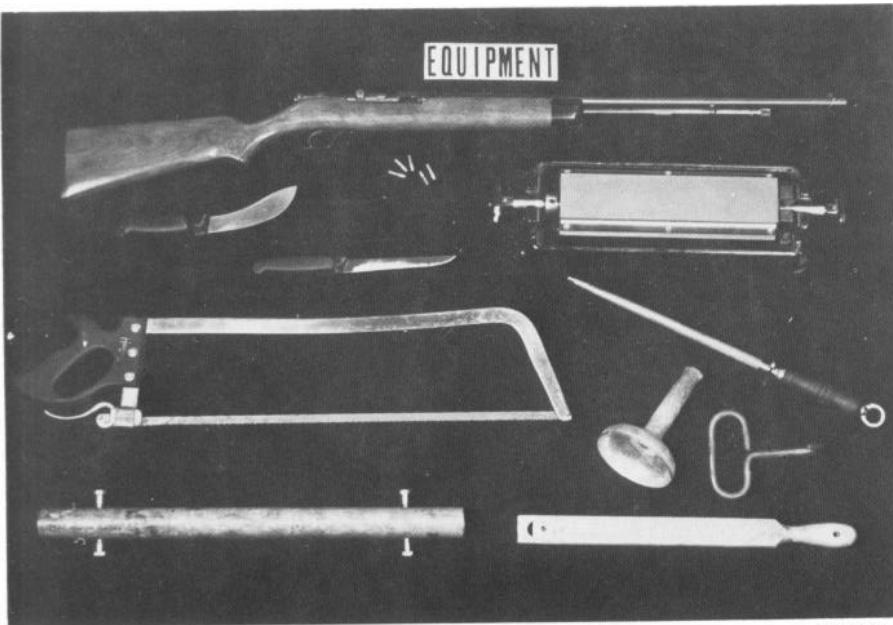


Figure 1.-Equipment for slaughter.

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5. Chocks - concrete blocks work well
6. Meat saw
7. Oil or water stone
8. Ample cold water for washing hands, equipment, carcass and byproducts
9. Tree with strong limb, beam or tripod 8 to 10 feet high, or tractor with hydraulic lift
10. Spreader (gambrel or metal pipe)
11. Buckets (2 or 3)
12. Ice or cold water
13. Straw for placing under animal during evisceration and splitting
14. Clean cloths or plastic for protection of meat during transport
15. Clean string
16. Scalding barrel
17. Pot or barrel for heating water
18. Bell scrapers (1 or 2) - these are not necessary but helpful
19. Plywood or other solid material for scalding platform
20. Thermometer which registers up to 200° F
21. Dry wood for fire
22. Hog or hay hook
23. Propane torch or blow torch

Be sure that all equipment that will come in contact with meat is thoroughly cleaned. Blood and other materials that get on the outer garments of workers during slaughter should not be transferred to the carcass after it is washed.

Additional equipment needed for cutting the carcass is listed in the section, "Cutting."

SLAUGHTER

Stunning

The animal should be killed as quickly and humanely as possible. In most slaughter plants, hogs are immobilized either by electrical stunning or carbon dioxide gas suffocation. On the farm a hog can be stunned by striking it one sharp blow with a mechanical stunner or by shooting it in the forehead midway between and slightly above the eyes. The first attempt should be successful (fig. 2). Improperly placed bullets could cause the animal much pain and injure helpers or other livestock. Animals that become excited during

stunning will not bleed as well as those less excited. As always *the case whenever using firearms, exercise all appropriate safety precautions.*

Bleeding

Bleeding is a very important part of the slaughtering operation. The animal should be bled within 2 minutes after it is down because the blood pressure may increase and thus break the capillaries and cause an unattractive condition in the meat called "blood splash." Although meat with this condition is safe for consumption, it is quite unpleasant in appearance.

After stunning the animal, place it



Figure 2.-Stunning.

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on its back, perfectly straight with the head close to the ground. A helper can stand over the animal and hold its front legs. Locate the tip of the breastbone, along the midline (fig. 3). A 6-inch sticking knife sharpened on both sides of the tip is best. However, a regular boning or skinning knife can be used. Hold the knife at a 35- to 40-degree angle, thrust it under the breastbone with the point aimed toward the tail and then give an upward thrust (dip the point) to sever the carotid artery (figs. 4 & 5). No twisting or cross-cutting of the knife is necessary. If the hog does not bleed, insert the knife a little deeper a second time and there should be little difficulty getting a good stick. To avoid a "shoulder stick," do not insert the knife too far to either side.

The bloody tissue resulting from a shoulder stick will subsequently require trimming. Care should also be taken to make certain that the hog does not kick you or the knife.

Hair or Skin Removal

Once the animal is bled, the hair can be removed by scalding the animal in hot water and scraping; or the skin and hair can be removed by skinning. Traditionally, hogs have been scalded and scraped, and the skin is left intact. Both procedures will be discussed because many people now find the skinning method to be easier, to require less equipment, and to result in an equally acceptable final product.



Figure 3.-Locating breastbone.

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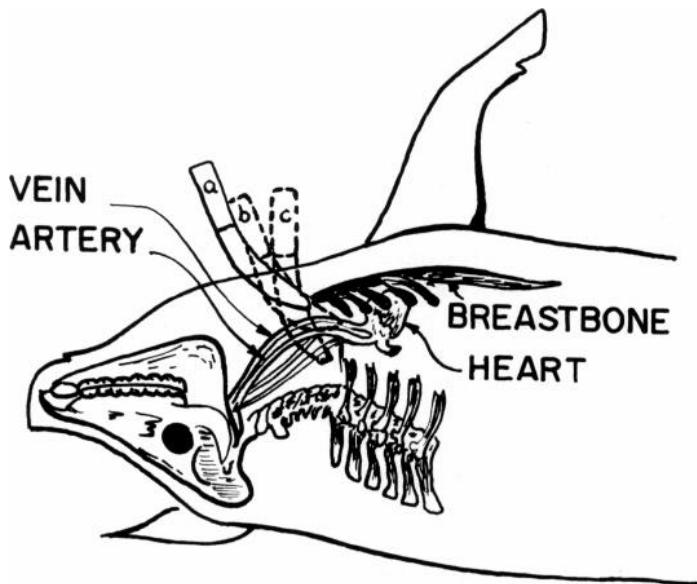


Figure 4.-Sticking (bleeding).



Figure 5.-Positions for sticking.

PN-5305

Scalding and Scraping Method:

For scalding, the most important consideration is maintaining an adequate supply of properly heated water. Approximately 50 gallons of near boiling water will be needed for each pig. This water should be ready (boiling) before the animal is stunned and bled. After the hot water is placed in the scalding barrel, it can be adjusted to the proper temperature for scalding by adding cold water.

The animal can be scalded by several methods. The easiest method is to have two barrels, one for heating the water and one for use as a scalding vat. Fifty-five gallon barrels will be large enough for most hogs. The scalding barrel can be buried in the ground at a slight angle; thus movement of the hog in and out of the barrel is easier (fig. 6). Be sure the

angle of the barrel is not too flat or the barrel will not hold enough water to cover the carcass. Another method for scalding is to have a scalding vat or a barrel under which a fire can be built. This method requires more construction, and the temperature of the water is difficult to control.

Slow scald is usually best. Scalding water temperatures between 140° and 140° F are optimal. At these optimal temperatures, 3 to 6 minutes of scalding are required to loosen the hair and scurf (layer of accumulated oil, dirt, and the outer layer of cells on the skin). In the fall when the winter hair is beginning to grow, the hair of most hogs is difficult to remove. Higher water temperatures (146° to 150° F) or longer submersion times are usually required for scalding during this "hard-hair" season. About 1/4 cup of rosin, lime,

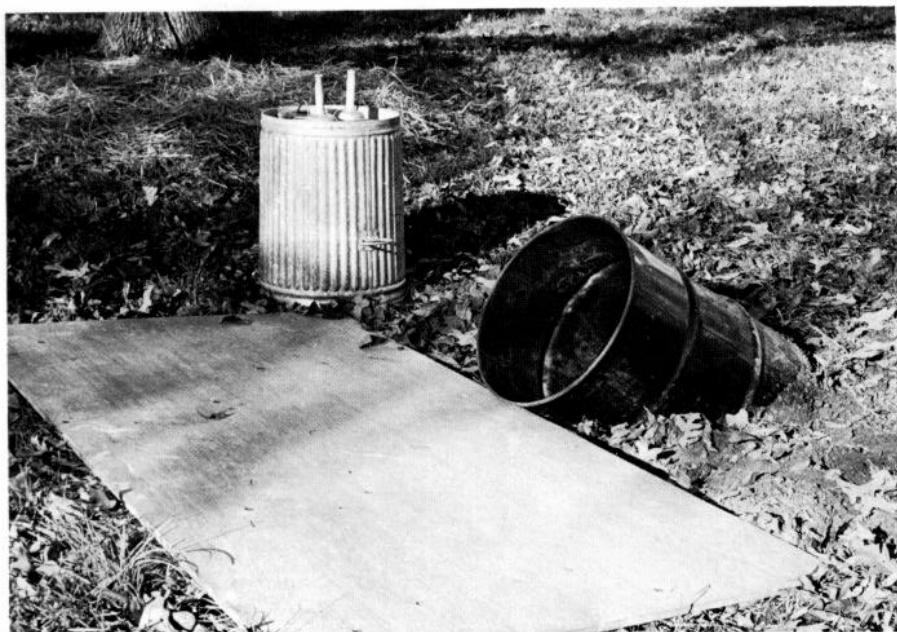


Figure B.--Scalding equipment.

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or some other alkaline material added to the scald water to aid in scurf removal results in a whiter skin.

On the farm, regulation of water temperature is difficult. Add boiling water to the scalding barrel, then add cool water to adjust to the proper temperature. Begin with the scalding water at 155° to 160° F because it cools rapidly. At these high temperatures, the carcass must be kept in motion and pulled from the barrel several times. This movement prevents overscalding. Overscalding causes the skin to contract around the base of the hair ("setting the hair") and cooks the skin. If the carcass is overscalded, the hair is extremely difficult to remove.

After the proper water temperature

has been attained, place the pig in the barrel, head first (fig. 7). Rotate the carcass in the barrel, pulling it in and out of the water occasionally. Check the hair often for ease of removal. The hair slips first over the back and sides, then in the flank regions. When the hair can be pulled easily in the flank regions behind the shoulders, remove the hog from the barrel and place the rear of the hog in the water.

While the rear of the hog is scalding, pull the toe nails and dew claws from the front feet by inserting a hook into the top of the nail and pulling (fig. 8). Scrape as much of the hair on the head as possible, especially around the ears and snout (fig. 9). When the hair slips in the rear flanks, remove the hog from the



Figure 7.-Scalding head first.

PN-5307



PN-5308

Figure 8--Removing toe nails.



PN-5309

Figure 9.—Scraping head.

barrel. Remove the toe nails and dew claws from the rear legs and pull the hair from the tail.

Grip the legs with both hands and twist to pull off the hair. Remove the hair in the difficult areas (head, feet, jowl) first, then proceed to the easier areas (back, sides). If you use the bell scraper, tilt the scraper upward on the forward edge and pull the scraper forward, applying as much pressure as possible (fig. 10).

Scrape the hot carcass as quickly as possible because the skin tends to "set" as it cools. If patches of hair and scurf are difficult to scrape, cover them with a burlap bag and pour hot water over them. Scraping is made easier by moving the legs or the head in order to stretch the skin, smoothing the wrinkles along the sides.

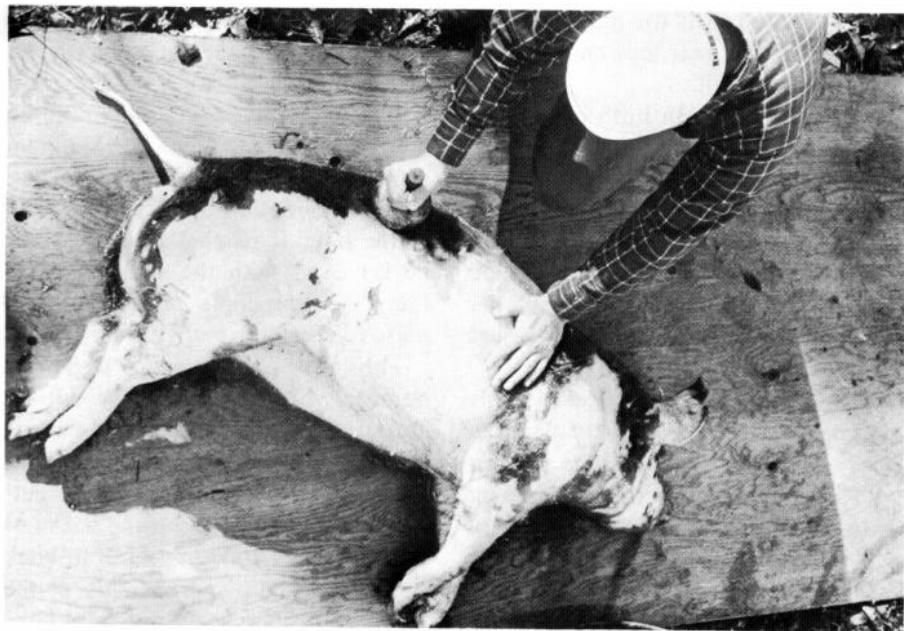
After most of the hair has been removed, pour water over the carcass and continue scraping. Place the scraper flat against the skin and move it in a rotary manner (fig. 11). This procedure aids in removal of scurf and dirt as well as removal of the rest of the hair. If patches of hair cannot be removed with the scraper, use a knife. Some people prefer to use a knife for the entire operation.

The carcass is now ready to be suspended. Clean the feet by cutting away the soles of the feet and cutting between and around the toes (fig. 12). Expose the gambrel tendons by cutting through the skin on the backs of the rear legs from dew claws to hock (fig. 13). Cut down each side of the tendons, being careful not to cut the tendons (fig. 14). Insert the spreader or gambrel under both tendons on



Figure 10.—Scraping head.

PN-5310



PN-5311

Figure 11.—Scraping middle.



PN-5312

Figure 12.-Cleaning feet.



PN-5313

Figure 13.-Exposing gambrel tendons.



PN-5314

Figure 14.-Exposing gambrel tendons.

each leg. Secure the legs to the spreader bar and suspend the carcass (fig. 15).

If available, a propane torch or blowtorch can be used to singe the remaining hair and scurf (fig. 16). Singeing removes most of the hair and allows small, light hairs to be seen. Use caution during singeing to prevent burning the skin. Shave the remaining hair and wash the carcass thoroughly. Continue with evisceration and splitting (pages 24-35).

Skinning Method:

The skinning procedure used for pork carcass is similar to that used for beef carcasses. Skinning requires less equipment and can be done faster than scalding and scraping. We have commonly believed that the skin was needed on hams and bacon to assure proper curing; however, this belief is not necessarily correct. A poor skinning job can lower the quality of the belly for bacon.

After stunning and bleeding the animal, move the carcass to the location of the hoisting equipment. Place the carcass on a sheet of plywood, a concrete slab, or straw. Wash the blood and dirt from the carcass. Turn the carcass on its back and hold it in place with blocks placed on each side (fig. 17).

Cut the hide around the rear legs, just below the dew claws (fig. 18). Make a cut through only the hide, down the back of the leg, over the hocks, and to the midline at the center of the hams (fig. 19). Skin around each side of the leg, removing the hide to a point below the hock (fig. 20).

Open the hide down the midline from the point where the animal was

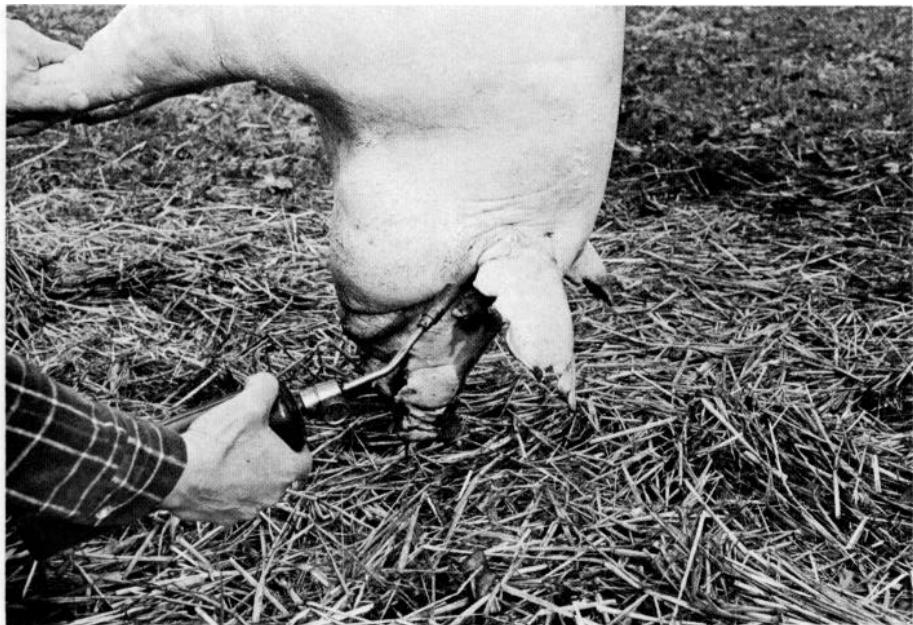


PN-5315

Figure 15.-Suspending the carcass.

stuck, around each side of the pubis area and continue to the anus (fig. 21). Make this cut by inserting the point of the knife under the skin with the blade turned up. This procedure is referred to as cutting from inside out and protects against meat contamination from materials on the hide. Avoid cutting too deeply because you may puncture the intestine and contaminate the carcass.

Remove the hide from the insides of the hams (fig. 22). Be careful, it is very easy to cut through the fat into the lean. Continue skinning along the sides toward the breast. Grasp the loosened hide in the opposite hand and pull it up and out. This places tension on the hide, removes wrinkles, and allows the knife to glide



PN-5316

Figure 16.-Singeing.



PN-5317

Figure 17.-Position for skinning.



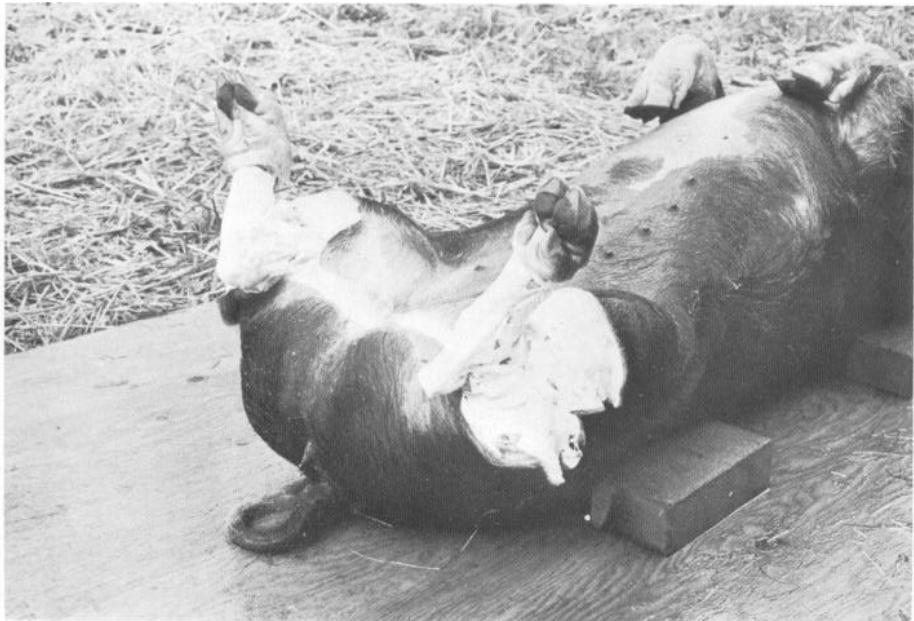
Figure 18.-Cutting skin around legs.

PN-5318



Figure 1g.-Cutting to midline.

PN-5319



PN-5320

Figure 20.-Skinning legs.



PN-5321

Figure 21.-Cutting down midline.



PN-5322

Figure 22.-Skinning hams.

smoothly. Holding the knife firmly, place it against the hide with the blade turned slightly outward (fig. 23). Skin as far down the sides as possible, but not around the front legs (fig. 24).

Return to the rear of the carcass and remove the hide left on the rear of the hams (fig. 25). Do not skin the outside of the hams at this time. Remove the rear feet by sawing through the bone about 2 inches above the hock (fig. 26). Insert the spreader under the large tendons on the rear legs (fig. 27) and secure the legs to the spreader.

Hoist the carcass to a convenient working height (waist high) for skin removal from the outside of the hams. Skin around the outsides of the hams, leaving as much fat as pos-

sible on the carcass. Remove the hide around the anus and cut through the tail at the joint closest to the body (fig. 28). Pull the hide down over the hips (fig. 29). The hide along the hips and back can be pulled off, leaving the fat on the carcass. Occasionally, you may need to use a knife to cut between the skin and the fat if large pieces of fat are being pulled off.

Hoist the carcass to a fully extended position. Open the hide down the rear of the forelegs. Remove the hide on each side of the forelegs (fig. 30). Skin along the inside of the forelegs and neck. Skin along the outside of the shoulders and jowls to a point approximately half way to the back of the carcass (fig. 31).

Slowly pull down and out on the



PN-5323

Figure 23.--Siding.



IV

Figure 24.-Siding.



Figure 25.-Skinning rear of hams.

PN-5325



Figure 26.--Removing feet.

PN-5326



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Figure ST.-Exposing tendon.



Figure 28.-Skinning rear of hams.

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PN-5329

Figure 29.-Removing hide from back.



PN-5330

Figure 30.-Skinning forelegs.

hide (fig. 32) removing it along the back. If the fat begins to tear, use a knife to correct the torn area and then continue pulling the hide. Remove the hide as far down the back as possible (fig. 33). When it becomes difficult to pull along the top of the neck, complete removal with a knife.

If the head is to be saved, skin over the poll and down the face (fig. 34). Remove the hide at the snout. Remove the front feet by sawing just below the knee joint (fig. 35). Continue with evisceration and splitting.

Evisceration

Loosen the anus by cutting around it, deep into the pelvic canal. Pull outward and cut any remaining attachments (fig. 36); be careful not to cut into the large intestine. When the anus is loosened, tie it with a piece of string to avoid contaminating the carcass (fig. 37).

Remove the penis from a slaughtered barrow. Cut through the skin and fatty tissue along each side of the penis and around the penis opening. Lift upward and cut underneath it



PN.5331

Figure 31.-Skinning sides and back.

PN-5332

Figure 32.-Pulling hide from back.

along the midline (fig. 38). Cut along the penis between the hams, pull the penis upward and remove it at its attachment at the base of the ham (fig. 39). Continue the cut made between the hams, at their natural separation, exposing the white connective tissue. Cut through the tissue to the pelvic (aitch) bone. Continue cutting through the cartilage between the aitch bone and separate the hams (fig. 40). This procedure is satisfactory in young pigs; however, a saw may be needed to split the aitch bone in older hogs.

Make a cut through the lean and

fat from the point where the pig was stuck to the upper end of the sternum or breastbone (fig. 41). Insert the knife at the top edge of the sternum, cut downward and slightly off-center to open the chest cavity (fig. 42).

Open the midline, beginning at the opening made when the aitch bone was split. With the handle of the knife inserted in the opening and with the blade pointed outward to avoid cutting the intestines (fig. 43), open the midline to the opening made at the breast (fig. 44). Allow the intestines and stomach to roll outward



PN.5333

Figure 33.-Pulling hide from back.



PN.5334

Figure 34.--Skinning head.



PN.5335

Figure 35.--Removing front legs.



Figure 36.-Loosening anus.

PN-5336

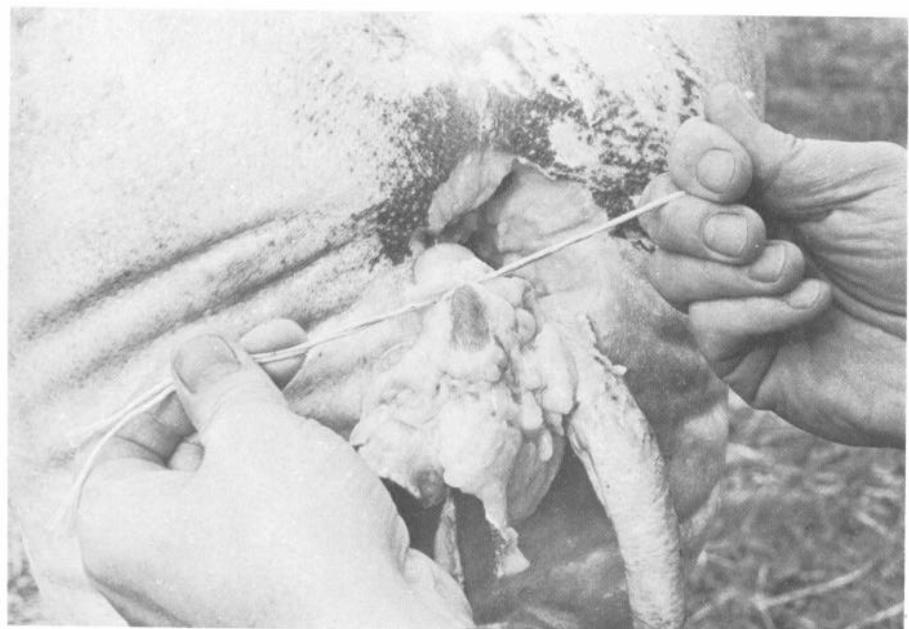
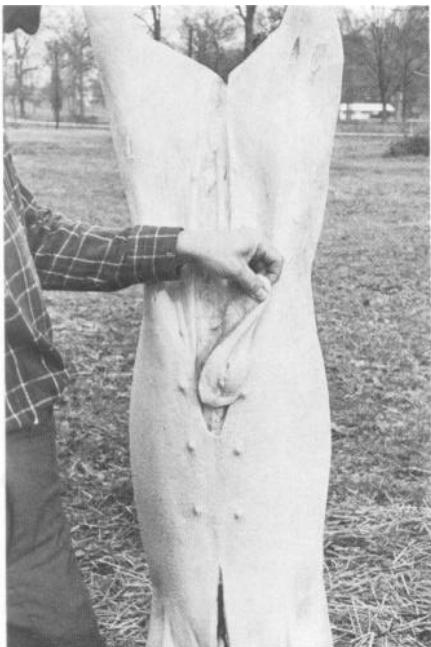


Figure 37.-Tying anus.

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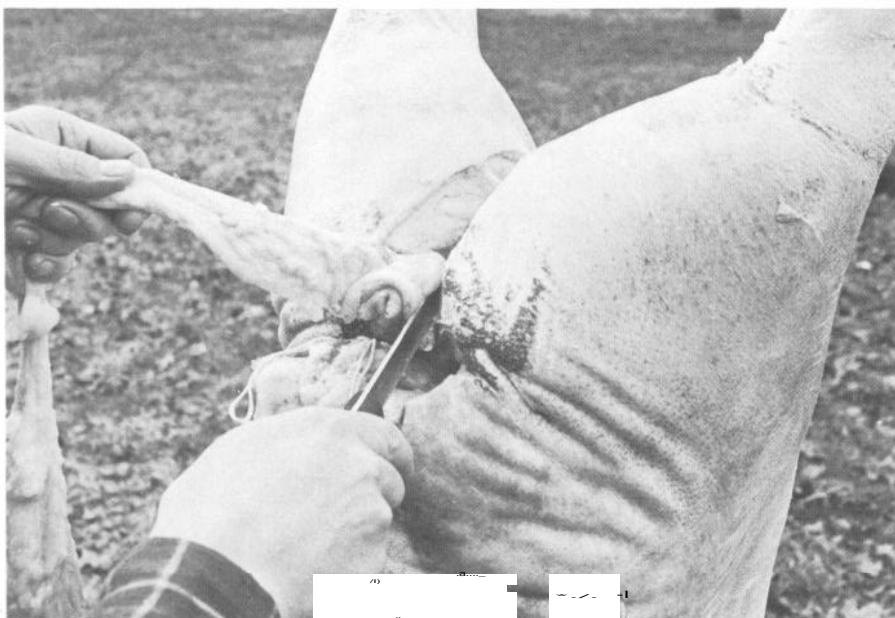
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Figure 38.-Removing penis.

and hang (fig. 45). Do not allow them to fall because the esophagus will tear and spill its contents onto the carcass.

Pull the loosened large intestine down past the kidneys (fig. 46). Sever the attachments to the liver and remove it by pulling outward and cutting the connective tissue (fig. 47). Remove the gall bladder from the liver by cutting beneath it and pulling (fig. 48). Be careful not to allow its contents to spill onto the liver.

Pull the stomach and intestines outward and cut through the diaphragm (fig. 49). This is the thin sheet of muscle and white connective tissue that separates the stomach and intestines from the lungs and heart. Pull outward on the lungs and heart and cut down each side of the windpipe, severing its attachment at the head (fig. 50). To separate the heart from the lungs, cut across its top (fig.



PN-5339

Figure 39.--Removing penis.



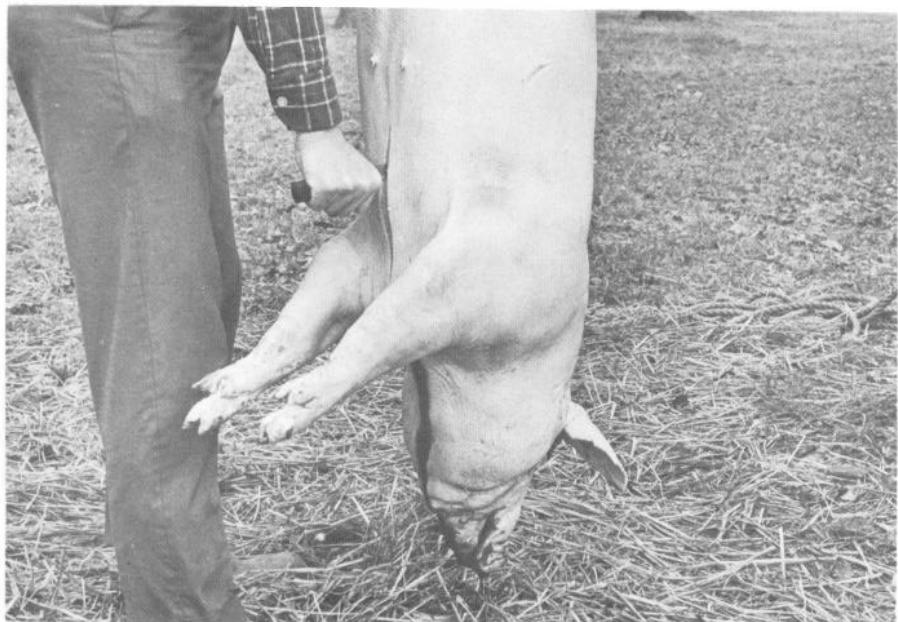
PN-5340

Figure 40.--Splitting pelvic bone.



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Figure 41 .-Tip of sternum.



PN-5343

Figure 42.-Opening the sternum.



PN-5343

Figure 43.-Opening the midline.



PN 5742

Figure 44.-Opening the midline.



PN-5345

Figure 45.-Intestines and stomach.



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Figure 46.-Pulling large intestine.



Figure 47.--Removing liver.

PN-5347

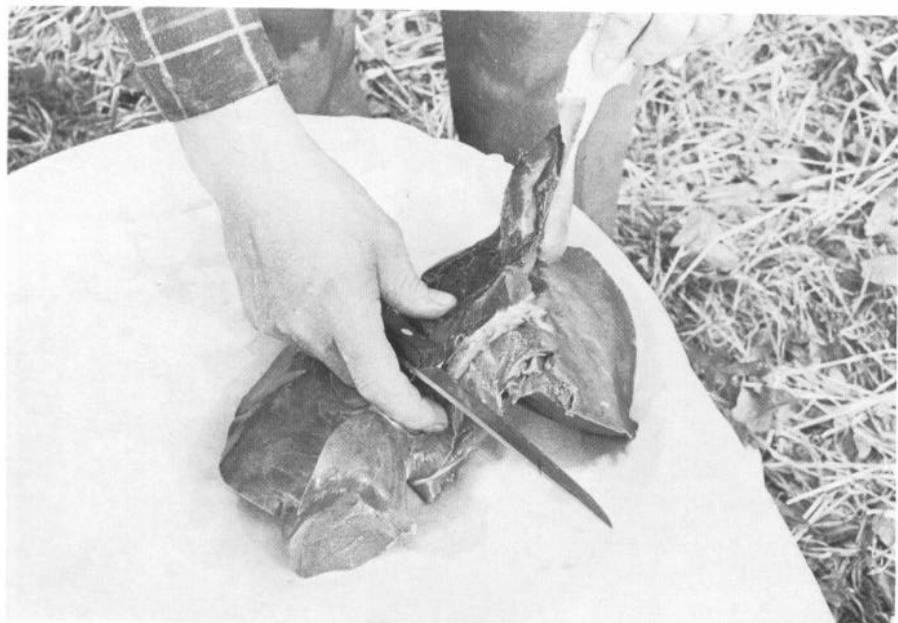


Figure 48.--Removing gall bladder.

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PN-5349

Figure 49.-Cutting diaphragm.



PN-5350

Figure 50.-Removing windpipe.



PN-5351

Figure 51.--Removing heart.

51). The heart should be split open to allow thorough washing. Wash the heart and liver thoroughly and put them in ice or ice water.

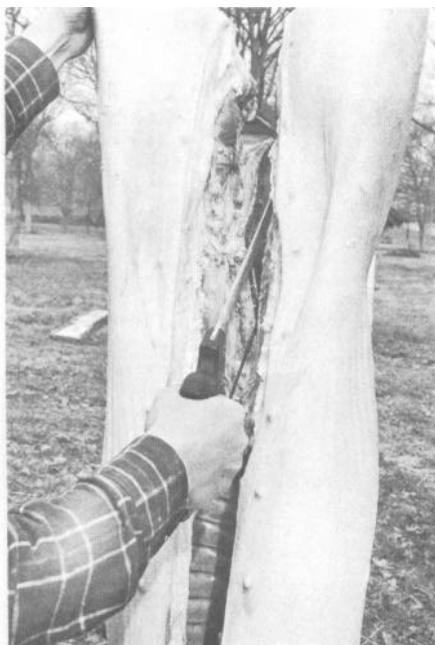
Splitting and Head Removal

Wash the inside of the carcass before splitting. With the saw, begin splitting from the inside between the hams (fig. 52). Keep the split as near the center of the backbone as possible, and saw through the tail region to a point midway through the loin (fig. 53). Move around to the back and continue sawing through the shoulder and neck to the base of the head (fig. 54). If the split gets off

center, continue sawing through to the next vertebra and then realine the saw.

Remove the head at the atlas joint (the joint closest to the head). This joint should be exposed if the carcass is properly split (fig. 55). After cutting through the joint cut downward along the jaw bone, leaving the jowls attached to the carcass. If desired, remove the tongue, wash it thoroughly, and place it with the liver and heart.

Remove the kidneys and leaf fat (figs. 56 and 57). The leaf fat is removed by loosening it from the diaphragm muscle and lifting it upward. Wash the carcass thoroughly before chilling.



PN-5352

Figure 52.—Splitting.



PN-5353

Figure 53.—Splitting.



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Figure 54.-Splitting.



PN-5355

Figure 55.--Removing head at atlas joint.



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Figure 56.--Removing kidney.



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Figure 57.--Removing leaf fat.

Examining the Carcass

All the internal organs and the dressed carcass (fig. 58) should be examined carefully for any abnormalities or conditions that might affect the fitness of the meat for food. Usually a meat inspector or graduate veterinarian is the only person qualified to do this, and one should be present to inspect the carcass; however, under farm conditions, you may need to look for the obvious signs of disease or damage yourself. If any part of the viscera or carcass is questionable, you should obtain expert advice.

Bruises, minor injuries, parasites in the organs, enclosed abscesses, and single tumors are frequently local conditions that can be easily

removed. However, congestion or inflammation of the lungs, intestines, kidneys, inner surface of chest, or abdominal cavity and numerous yellowish or pearl-like growths scattered throughout the organs should be viewed seriously. Carcasses and viscera having such abnormalities should be examined by a graduate veterinarian and his opinion obtained as to the wholesomeness of the meat. *You should check with a cooperating veterinarian before you slaughter the animal to be certain he will be available if you should seek his advice.*

CHILLING THE CARCASS

The surfaces of freshly slaughtered hog carcasses are contaminated with bacteria that can spoil the meat unless their growth is promptly checked. Bacterial growth can be slowed by prompt chilling and keeping the carcass at low temperatures. If the weather is suitable (28° to 35° F), the carcass can be wrapped in a sheet, hung, and chilled in a well-ventilated shed. Wrapping with clean cloth will partially protect the carcass from contamination.

Do not allow the carcass to freeze because freezing within 1 day after death may toughen the meat. If the carcass cannot be chilled to below 40° F on the farm, it should be transported to a local locker plant or market for chilling. The need for prompt and thorough chilling of warm carcasses cannot be over-emphasized for the inhibition of bacterial growth. The carcass can be cut into retail cuts after it has been chilled for 24 to 48 hours.



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Figure 58.-Completed carcass.

CUTTING

Use the following guidelines in determining cutting and packaging instructions for the processor if the carcass is not cut and wrapped on the farm.

Chops.-Can be broiled, braised, or pan fried. Chops should be at least one-half to three-fourths of an inch thick for frying or braising, and 1 inch thick for broiling. Figure one or two chops per serving. Allow three-fourths of a pound of uncooked meat (bone-in) per person as a guide.

Roasts.- Allow three-fourths of a pound per serving for bone-in roasts (ham, picnic, shoulder) and one-half pound per serving for boneless roast (boned and rolled Boston butt or shoulder).

Sausage.-Allow one-third pound per serving.

Carcass Cutting Equipment

Elaborate and expensive equipment is not necessary but certain items are essential. The following equipment is recommended (fig. 59):

1. Steel
2. Boning knife
3. Large steak knife
4. Meat saw
5. Freezer paper (see section on "wrapping")
6. Freezer tape
7. Meat grinder (electric or hand powered)
8. Clean water

Cutting the Carcass

Remove the hind foot by sawing through the hock joint at the right

angle to the length of the foot (fig. 60).

The ham may be removed two ways. The long-cut ham is cut off at the pelvic arch (bend in the backbone) perpendicular to the length of the side (fig. 61). This style ham lends itself to dry salt curing and aging. The popular short-cut ham is separated from the side by a cut approximately halfway between the pelvic arch and the end of the pelvic bone at a right angle to the shank (fig. 62).

The front foot is removed by sawing through the hock (knee) joint at a right angle to the length of the foot (fig. 63). A shoulder hock may be cut off about halfway up the leg (fig. 64). To separate the shoulder from the loin and belly, locate the second rib from the front and saw through the center of this rib (fig. 65).

The remaining part (middle) is divided into the loin and the belly by a straight cut from the edge of the tenderloin muscle on the ham end through a point on the first rib about 2 inches from the protruding edge of the split backbone (figs. 66 and 67).

The tail, backbone, and flank are removed from the ham; and the fat over the inside (top), in the pelvic area, and along each side is trimmed close to the lean (fig. 68). Most of the skin and fat are left on the long-cut ham with only a short bevel at the butt (loin) end. Five or six inches of skin may be removed from the short-cut ham by cutting under the skin approximately half the distance between the butt edge and the hock (fig. 69). The exposed fat is then smoothly tapered to a thickness of about one-half inch at the butt end (fig. 70).

The fat back is removed from the